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HYMNS IN PROSE,

FOR



THE USE OF CHILDREN.

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PREFACE.

THE peculiar design of this publication is, to impress devotional feelings as early as possible on the infant mind; fully convinced, as the author is, that they cannot be impressed too soon; and that a child, to feel the full force of the idea of God, ought never to remember the time when he had no such idea;—to impress them by connecting religion with a variety of sensible objects; with all that he sees, all he hears, all that affects his young mind with wonder or delight; and thus, by deep, strong, and permanent associations, to lay the best foundation for practical devotion in future life: for he who has been early accustomed to see the Creator in the visible appearances of all around him, to feel his continual presence, and to lean upon his daily protection, has made large advances towards that habitual piety, without which religion is but a name.

A. L. B.



HYMNS

FOR

THE USE OF CHILDREN.

HYMN I.

COME, let us praise God, for he is exceedingly great; let us bless God, for he is very good.

He made all things; the sun to rule the day, the moon to shine by night.

He made the great whale, and the elephant; and the little worm that crawleth upon the ground.

The little birds sing praises to God, when they warble sweetly in the green shade.

The brooks and rivers praise God, when they murmur melodiously amongst the smooth pebbles.

I will praise God with my voice; for I may praise him, though I am but a little child.

A few years ago, and I was but a little infant, and my tongue was dumb within my mouth.

And I did not know the great name of God, for my reason was not come unto me.

But now, I can speak, and my tongue shall praise him: I can think of all his kindness, and my heart shall love him.

Let him call me, and I will come unto him; let him command, and I will obey him.

When I am older, I will praise him better; and I will never forget God, so long as my life remaineth in me.



HYMN II.

COME, let us go forth into the fields, let us see how the flowers spring, let us listen to the singing of the birds, and sport ourselves upon the new grass.

The winter is over and gone, the buds come out upon the trees, the crimson blossoms of the peach and the nectarine are seen; and the green leaves sprout.

The hedges are bordered with tufts of primroses, and yellow cowslips that hang down their heads; and the blue violet lies hid beneath the shade.

The young goslings are running upon the green, they are just hatched, their bodies are covered with yellow down; the old ones hiss with anger if any one comes near.

The hen sits upon her nest of straw; she watches patiently the full time, till the young chickens get strength to break the shell with their bills, and come out.

The lambs sport in the field, they totter by the side of their dams, their young limbs at first can hardly support their weight.

If you fall, little lambs, you will not be hurt; there is spread under you a carpet of soft grass; it is spread for you and us.

The butterflies flutter from bush to bush, and open their wings to the warm sun.

The young animals of every kind are sporting about, they feel themselves happy, they are glad to be alive; they thank him that he has made them aliye.

They may thank him in their hearts, but we can thank him with our tongues; our gifts are greater than theirs; therefore, we ought to praise him more.

The birds can warble, and the young lambs can bleat; but we can open our lips in his praise, we can speak of all his goodness.

Therefore, we will thank him for ourselves, and we will thank him for those that cannot speak.

Trees that blossom, and little lambs that skip about; if you could you would say, how good he is; but you are dumb, we will say it for you.

We will not offer you up in sacrifice, but we will offer sacrifice for you, on every hill, and in every green field; we will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and the incense of praise.



HYMN III.

BEHOLD, the shepherd of the flock, he taketh care for his sheep, he leadeth them among the clear brooks, he guideth them to fresh pasture; if the young lambs are weary, he carrieth them in his arms; if they wander, he bringeth them back.

But who is the shepherd's Shepherd? Who taketh care for him? Who guideth him in the path he should go? And if he wander, who shall bring him back?

God is the shepherd's Shepherd: he is the Shepherd over all: he taketh care for all; the whole earth is his fold; we are all his flock; and every herb, and every green field is the pasture which he hath prepared for us.

The mother loveth her little child; she bringeth it up on her knees; she nourisheth its body with food; she feedeth its mind with knowledge; if it is sick, she nurseth it with tender love; she watcheth over it when asleep; she forgetteth it not for a moment; she teacheth it how to be good; she rejoiceth daily in its growth.

But who is the parent of the mother? Who nourisheth her with good things, and watcheth over her with tender love, and remembereth her every moment? Whose arms are about her to guard her from harm? And if she is sick, who shall heal her?

God is the parent of the mother; he is the parent of all, for he created all. All the men, and all the women who are alive in the wide world, are his children: he loveth all, he is good to all.

The king governeth his people; he hath a golden crown upon his head, and the royal sceptre is in his hand; he sitteth upon a throne, and sendeth forth his commands; his subjects fear before him; if they do well, he protecteth them from danger; and if they do evil, he punisheth them.

But who is the sovereign of the king? Who commandeth him what he must do? Whose hand is stretched out to protect him from danger? And if he do evil, who shall punish him?

God is the sovereign of the king; his crown is a crown of glory, and his throne is in heaven above.

He is King of kings, and Lord of lords; if he bid us live, we live; if he bid us die, we die: his dominion is over all worlds, and the light of his countenance is upon all his works.

God is our shepherd, therefore, we will follow him: God is our father, therefore, we will love him: God is our king, therefore, we will obey him.



HYMN IV.

COME, and I will show you what is beautiful. It is a rose fully blown. See how she sits upon her mossy stem, like the queen of all the flowers! Her leaves glow like fire; the air is filled with her sweet odour; she is the delight of every eye.

She is beautiful, but there is fairer than she. He that made the rose is more beautiful than the rose: he is all lovely: he is the delight of every heart.

I will show you what is strong. The lion is strong; when he raiseth up himself from his lair, when he shaketh his mane, when the voice of his roaring is heard, the cattle of the field fly, and the wild beasts of the desert hide themselves, for he is very terrible.

The lion is strong, but he that made the lion is stronger than him: His anger is terrible. He could

make us die in a moment, and no one could save us from his hand.

I will show you what is glorious. The sun is glorious. When he shineth in the clear sky, when he sitteth on his bright throne in the heavens, and looketh abroad over all the earth, he is the most glorious and excellent object the eye can behold.

The sun is glorious, but he that made the sun is more glorious than him. The eye beholdeth him not, for his brightness is more dazzling than we could bear. He seeth in all dark places; by night as well as by day; and the light of his countenance is over all his works.

Who is this great name, and what is he called, that my lips may praise him?

This great name is GOD. He made all things, but he is himself more excellent than all which he hath made; they are beautiful, but he is beauty; they are strong, but he is strength; they are perfect, but he is perfection.

HYMN V.

THE glorious sun is set in the west; the night dews fall; and the air which was sultry becomes cool.

The flowers fold up their coloured leaves: they fold themselves up, and hang their heads on the slender stalk.

The chickens are gathered under the hen, and are at rest; the hen herself is at rest also.

The little birds have ceased their warbling; they are asleep on the boughs, each one with his head behind his wing.

There is no murmur of bees around the hive, or amongst the honied woodbines: they have done their work, and lie close in their waxen cells.

The sheep rest upon their soft fleeces, and their loud bleating is no more heard amongst the hills.

There is no sound of a number of voices, or of children at play, or the trampling of busy feet, and of people hurrying to and fro.

The smith's hammer is not heard upon the anvil; nor the harsh saw of the carpenter.

All men are stretched on their quiet beds; and the child sleeps upon the breast of its mother.

Darkness is spread over the skies, and darkness is upon the ground; every eye is shut, and every hand is still.

Who taketh care of all people when they are sunk in sleep; when they cannot defend themselves, nor see if danger approacheth?

There is an eye that never sleepeth; there is an eye that seeth in the dark night, as well as in the bright sunshine.

When there is no light of the sun, nor of the moon; when there is no lamp in the house, nor any little star twinkling through the thick clouds; that eye seeth every where, in all places, and watcheth continually over all the families of the earth.

The eye that sleepeth not is God's: his hand is always stretched out over us.

He made sleep to refresh us when we are weary; he made night, that we might sleep in quiet.

As the mother moveth about the house with her finger on her lips, and stilleth every little noise, that her infant may not be disturbed; as she draweth the curtains around its bed, and shutteth out the light from its tender eyes; so God draweth the curtains of darkness around us: so he maketh all things to be

hushed and still, that his large family may sleep in peace.

Labourers spent with toil, and young children, and every little insect, sleep quietly, for God watcheth over you.

You may sleep, for he never sleeps; you may close your eyes in safety, for his eye is always open to protect you.

When the darkness is passed away, and the beams of the morning sun strike through your eyelids, begin the day with praising God, who hath taken care of you through the night.

Flowers, when you open again, spread your leaves, and smell sweet to his praise.

Birds, when you awake, warble your thanks amongst the green boughs; sing to him, before you sing to your mates.

Let his praise be in our hearts, when we lie down; let his praise be on our lips when we awake.

HYMN VI.

CHILD of reason, whence comest thou? What hath thine eye observed, and whither has thy foot been wandering?

I have been wandering along the meadows, in the thick grass. The cattle were feeding around me, or reposing in the cool shade; the corn sprung up under the furrows; the poppy and the hair-bell grew among the wheat; the fields were bright with summer, and glowing with beauty.

Didst thou see nothing more? Didst thou observe nothing besides? Return again, child of reason, for there are greater things than these. God was among the fields; and didst thou not perceive him? His beauty was amongst the meadows; his smiles enlivened the sunshine.

I have walked through the thick forest; the wind whispered among the trees; the brook fell from the rocks with a pleasant murmur; the squirrel leapt from bough to bough, and the birds sung to each other amongst the branches.

Didst thou hear nothing but the murmur of the brook? No whispers but the whispers of the wind? Return again, child of reason, for there are greater things than these. God was among the trees; his

voice sounded in the murmur of the water; his music warbled in the shade; and didst thou not attend?

I saw the moon rising behind the trees; it was like a lamp of gold: the stars one after another appeared in the clear firmament. Presently, I saw black clouds arise, and roll towards the south; the lightning streamed in thick flashes over the sky; the thunder growled at a distance; it came nearer, and I felt afraid, for it was loud and terrible.

Did thy heart feel no terror but of the thunderbolt? Was there nothing bright and terrible, but the lightning? Return, oh! child of reason, for there are greater things than these: God was in the storm, and didst thou not perceive him? His terrors were abroad, and did not thine heart acknowledge him?

God is in every place; he speaks in every sound we hear; he is seen in all that our eyes behold; nothing, oh! child of reason, is without God: let God, therefore, be in all thy thoughts.



HYMN VII.

COME, let us go into the thick shade, for it is the noon of the day, and the summer sun beats hot upon our heads.

The shade is pleasant and cool; the branches meet above our heads, and shut out the sun, as with a green curtain; the grass is soft to our feet, and a clear brook washes the roots of the trees.

The sloping bank is covered with flowers; let us lie down upon it; let us throw our limbs on the fresh grass, and sleep; for all things are still, and we are quite alone.

The cattle lie down to sleep in the cool shade, but we can do what is better; we can raise our voices to heaven; we can praise the great God who made us. He made the warm sun and the cool shade; the trees that grow upwards, and the brooks that run murmuring along. All the things that we see are his work.

Can we raise our voices up to the high heaven? Can we make him hear who is above the stars? Yes; for he heareth us when we only whisper; when we breathe out words softly, with a low voice. He that filleth the heavens is here also.

May we that are so young speak to him that always was?

May we that can hardly speak plain, speak to God?

We that are so young, are but lately made alive; therefore, we should not forget his forming hand, who hath made us alive. We that cannot speak plain, should lisp out praises to him who teacheth us how to speak, and hath opened our dumb lips.

When we could not think of him, he thought of us; before we could ask him to bless us, he had already given us many blessings.

He fashioneth our tender limbs, and causeth them to grow: he maketh us strong, tall, and nimble.

Every day we are more active than the former day; therefore, every day we ought to praise him better than the former day.

The buds spread into leaves, and the blossoms swell to fruit; but they know not how they grow, nor who causeth them to spring up from the bosom of the earth.

Ask them, if they will tell thee; bid them break forth into singing, and fill the air with pleasant sounds.

They smell sweet; they look beautiful; but they are quite silent: no sound is in the still air: no murmur of voices among the green leaves.

The plants and trees are made to give fruit to man; but man is made to praise God who made him.

We love to praise him, because he loveth to bless us; we thank him for life, because it is a pleasant thing to be alive.

We love God, who hath created all beings; we

love all beings, because they are the creatures of God.

We cannot be good, as God is good to all persons every where; but we can rejoice, that every where there is a God to do them good.

We will think of God when we play, and when we work; when we walk out, and when we come in; when we sleep, and when we wake, his praise shall dwell continually on our lips.



HYMN VIII.

SEE where stands the cottage of the labourer, covered with warm thatch; the mother is spinning at the door; the young children sport before her on the grass: the elder ones learn to labour, and are obedient: the father worketh to provide them food: either he tilleth the ground, or he gathereth corn, or shaketh the ripe apples from the tree: his children run to meet him when he cometh home, and his wife prepareth the wholesome meal.

The father, the mother, and the children make a family; the father is the master thereof. If the family is numerous, and the grounds large, there are servants to help do the work: all these dwell in one house; they sleep beneath one roof; they eat of the same bread: their hearts are bowed together

night and morning adoring their Creator: they are very closely united, and are dearer to each other than any strangers. If one is sick, they mourn together; and if one is happy, they rejoice together.

Many houses are built together; many families live near one another; they meet together on the green, and in pleasant walks, and to buy and sell, and in the house of justice; and they gather together to worship the great God, in companies. If one is poor, his neighbour helpeth him; if he is sad, he comforteth him. This is a village; see where it stands, inclosed in a green shade, and the tall spire peeps above the trees. If there be very many houses, it is a town—it is governed by a magistrate.

Many towns, and a large extent of country, make a state or kingdom: it is inclosed by mountains; it is divided by rivers; it is washed by seas; the inhabitants thereof are countrymen; they speak the same language; they make war and peace together, a king is the ruler thereof.

Many kingdoms, and countries full of people, and islands, and large continents and different climates, make up this whole world—God governeth it. The people swarm upon the face of it like ants upon a hillock: some are black with the hot sun—some cover themselves with furs against the sharp cold—some drink of the fruit of the vine—some of the pleasant milk of the cocoa nut—and others quench their thirst with the running stream.

All are God's family; he knoweth every one of them, as a shepherd knoweth his flock: they pray to him in different languages, but he understands them all: he heareth them all; he taketh care of all: none are so great that he cannot punish them; none are so mean that he will not protect them.

Negro woman, who sittest pining in captivity, and weepest over thy sick child, though no one seeth thee, God seeth thee; though no one pitieth thee, God pitieth thee: raise thy voice, forlorn and abandoned one; call upon him from amidst thy bonds, for assuredly he will hear thee.

Monarch, that rulest over an hundred states; whose frown is terrible as death, and whose armies cover the land; boast not thyself as though there was none above thee: God is above thee—his powerful arm is always over thee: and if thou doest ill, assuredly he will punish thee.

Nations of the earth, fear the Lord: families of men, call upon the name of your God.



HYMN IX.

COME, let us walk abroad: let us talk of the works of God.

Take up a handful of sand: number the grains of it; tell them one by one into thy lap.

Try if thou canst count the blades of grass in the field, or the leaves on the trees.

We cannot count them, they are innumerable: much more the things which God has made.

The fir groweth on the high mountain, and the grey willow bends above the stream.

The thistle is armed with sharp prickles; the mal-low is soft and woolly.

The hop layeth hold with her tendrils, and clasp-eth the tall pole; the oak hath firm root in the ground, and resisteth the winter storm.

The daisy enamelleth the meadows, and groweth beneath the foot of the passenger; the tulip asketh a rich soil and the careful hand of the gardener.

The iris and the reed spring up in the marsh; the rich grass covereth the meadows; and the purple heath flower enliveneth the waste ground.

The waterlilies grow beneath the stream; their broad leaves float on the water: the wall-flower takes root in the hard stone, and spreads its fragrance amongst the broken ruins.

Every leaf is of a different form: every plant hath a separate inhabitant.

Look at the thorns that are white with blossoms,

and the flowers that cover the fields, and the plants that are trodden in the green path. The hand of man hath not planted them; the sower hath not scattered the seeds from his hands, nor the gardener digged a place for them with his spade.

Some grow on steep rocks, where no man can climb; in shaking bogs, and deep forests, and desert islands; they spring up every where, and cover the the bosom of the whole earth.

Who causeth them to grow every where, and bloweth the seeds about in winds, and mixeth them with the mould, and watereth them with soft rains, and cherisheth them with dews? Who fanneth them with the pure breath of heaven, and giveth them colours, and smells, and spreadeth out their thin transparent leaves?

How doth the rose draw its crimson from the dark brown earth, or the lily its shining white? How can a small seed contain a plant? How doth every plant know its season when to put forth? They are marshalled in order: each one knoweth his place, and standeth up in his own rank.

The snowdrop and the primrose make haste to lift up their heads above the ground. When the spring cometh, they shoot forth!—The carnation waiteth for the full strength of the year; and the hardy laurustinus cheereth the winter months.

Every plant produceth its like. An ear of corn

will not grow from an acorn; nor will a grape-stone produce cherries: but every one springeth from its proper seed.

Who preserveth them alive through the cold winter, when the snow is on the ground, and the sharp frost bites on the plain? Who saveth a small seed, and a little warmth in the bosom of the earth, and causeth them to spring up afresh, and sap to rise through the hard fibres?

The trees are withered, naked, and bare: they are like dry bones. Who breatheth on them with the breath of spring, and they are covered with verdure, and green leaves sprout from the dead wood?

Lo, these are part of his works: and a little portion of his wonders.

There is little need that I should tell you of God, for every thing speaks of him.

Every field is like an open book; every painted flower hath a lesson written on its leaves.

Every murmuring brook hath a tongue: a voice is in every whispering wind.

They all speak of him who made them: they all tell us he is very good.

We cannot see God, for he is invisible; but we can see his works, and worship his footsteps in the green sod.

They that know the most, will praise God the best; but which of us can number half his works?



HYMN X.

CHILD of mortality, whence comest thou? Why is thy countenance sad, and why are thine eyes red with weeping?

I have seen the rose in its beauty; it spread its leaves to the morning sun:—I returned, it was dying upon its stalk: the grace of the form of it was gone; its loveliness was vanished away; the leaves thereof were scattered on the ground, and no one gathered them again.

A stately tree grew on the plain; its branches were covered with verdure; its boughs spread wide, and made a goodly shadow; the trunk was like a strong pillar; the roots were like crooked fangs:—I returned, the verdure was nipt by the east wind; the branches were lopt away by the axe; the worm had made its way into the trunk, and the heart thereof was decayed: it mouldered away, and fell to the ground.

I have seen the insects sporting in the sunshine, and darting along the stream; their wings glittered with gold and purple: their bodies shone like the green emerald; they were more numerous than I could count; their motions were quicker than my

eye could glance: I returned, they were brushed into the pool, they were perishing with the evening breeze: the swallow had devoured them; the pike had seized them: there were none found of so great a multitude.

I have seen man in the pride of his strength; his cheeks glowed with beauty; his limbs were full of activity; he walked, he ran, he rejoiced in that he was more excellent than those: I returned, he lay stiff and cold on the bare ground; his feet could no longer move, nor his hands stretch themselves out; his life was departed from him; and the breath out of his nostrils.—Therefore do I weep, because death is in the world; the spoiler is among the works of God: all that is made must be destroyed; all that is born must die. Let me alone, for I will weep yet longer.



HYMN XI.

I have seen the flower withering on the stalk, and its bright leaves spread on the ground:—I looked again, and it sprung forth afresh; the stem was crowned with new buds, and the sweetness thereof filled the air.

I have seen the sun set in the west, and the shades of night shut in the wide horizon: there was no colour, nor shape, nor beauty, nor music; gloom

and darkness brooded around: I looked, the sun broke forth again from the east, and gilded the mountain tops: the lark rose to meet him from her own nest, and the shades of darkness fled away.

I have seen the insect, being come to its full size, languish and refuse to eat. It spun itself into a tomb, and was shrouded in the silken cone; it lay without feet or shape, or power to move. I looked again, it had burst its tomb: it was full of life, and sailed on coloured wings through the soft air; it rejoiced in its new being.

Thus shall it be with thee, O man, and so shall thy life be renewed.

Thy body shall return to the dust from whence it came, but thy soul to God who gave it; and if thou art good, thou shalt be happy evermore.

Who is he that cometh to save from sin and eternal death?

He descendeth on a fiery cloud; the sound of a trumpet goeth before him; thousands of angels are on his right hand.

It is Jesus, the Son of God; the Saviour of men; the friend of the good.

He cometh in the glory of his Father: he hath received power from on high.

Mourn not, therefore, child of immortality! for the spoiler, the cruel spoiler, that laid waste the works of God, is subdued: Jesus hath conquered death: child of immortality, mourn no longer.

HYMN XII.

THE rose is sweet, but it is surrounded with thorns; the lily of the valley is fragrant, but it springeth up among brambles.

The spring is pleasant, but it is soon past; the summer is bright, but the winter destroyeth the beauty thereof.

The rainbow is very glorious, but it is soon vanished away: life is good, but it is quickly swallowed up in death.

There is a place of rest for the righteous.

In that land there is an eternal spring, and light without any cloud.

The tree of life groweth in the midst thereof, rivers of pleasure are there, and flowers that never fade.

Myriads of happy spirits are there, and surround the throne of God with a perpetual hymn.

The angels with their golden harps sing praises continually, and the cherubim fly on wings of love.

This country is heaven; it is the country of those that are good; and nothing that is wicked must inhabit there.

The toad must not spit his venom among turtle doves; nor the poisonous henbane grow amongst sweet flowers.

Neither must any one that doeth ill enter into that good land.

This earth is pleasant, for it is God's earth, and it is filled with many delightful things.

But that country is far better; there, we shall not grieve any more, nor be sick any more, nor do wrong any more: there, the cold of winter shall not wither us, nor the heats of summer scorch us.

In that country, there are no wars nor quarrels, but all love one another with dear love.

When our parents die, and are laid in the cold ground, we see them here no more: but there we shall embrace them again, and live with them, and be separated no more.

There we shall meet all good men, whom we read of in holy books.

There we shall see Abraham, the called of God, the father of the faithful; and Moses, after his long wanderings in the Arabian desert; and Elijah, the prophet of God; and Daniel, who escaped the lion's den: and there the son of Jesse, the shepherd king, the sweet singer of Israel.

They loved God on earth; but in that country they will praise him better, and love him more.

There we shall see Jesus, who is gone before us to that happy place; and there we shall behold the glory of the high God.

We cannot see him here, but we must love him here: we must be now on earth, but we will often think on heaven.

That happy land will be our home, if we live in the love and fear of the Great God who made us, and strive to do all the good we can: we are to be here but for a little while, and there for ever ever, for ages of eternal years.